

In the Claims:

1 1. (currently amended) A splice for connecting thin-walled
2 components to each other, said splice comprising a first
3 end portion of a structural component, a second end portion
4 of a further structural component, an overlapping contact
5 surface area between said first and second end portions, at
6 least one fatigue critical row (6) of rivets subject to
7 dynamic loads and passing through said first and second end
8 portions and through said overlapping contact surface area,
9 a further row (7) of rivets extending between an end
10 portion edge (4A) and said at least one fatigue critical
11 row of rivets, said further row (7) of rivets comprising
12 rivets holding said first and second end portions together
13 in a direction perpendicularly to said overlapping contact
14 surface area, said ~~second~~ further row (7) of rivets
15 comprising rivets rivet shafts (10, 16), and a gap
16 providing play (at 11, 12, 15) between each of said rivet
17 shafts and any one of said first and second end portions
18 for permitting a relative motion of said first and second
19 end portions in a direction parallel to said overlapping
20 contact surface area for reducing crack formation and crack
21 propagation and for relieving stress from said fatigue
22 critical row (6) of rivets.

1 2. (currently amended) The splice of claim 1, wherein said
2 ~~second~~ further row of rivets comprises rivets each
3 respectively including ~~said holding means in the form of~~

4549/WFF:kd

- 2 -

4 a rivet head, a respective one of said rivet shaft, shafts,
5 and a rivet closure for providing a positive interlocking
6 force in a direction parallel to a central axis (9) of said
7 rivet shaft and for further providing a slidable fit in
8 said direction parallel to said overlapping contact surface
9 area, said positive interlocking force providing friction
10 in said overlapping contact surface area.

1 3. (currently amended) The splice of claim 2, wherein said
2 rivet shaft comprises a first shaft section with a first
3 shaft diameter fitting snugly into a first rivet hole in
4 one of said first and second end portions, and a second
5 shaft section having a second diameter smaller than said
6 first shaft diameter, said second smaller shaft diameter
7 providing ~~[[a]]~~ said gap (12) between said second shaft
8 section and a wall of a second rivet hole in the other end
9 portion of said first and second end portions for
10 permitting said ~~limited~~ relative motion.

1 4. (currently amended) The splice of claim 2, wherein said
2 rivet shaft comprises a uniform shaft diameter between said
3 rivet head and said rivet closure, said first end portion
4 having a first rivet hole with a hole diameter providing a
5 snug fit between a wall of said first rivet hole and said
6 rivet shaft, said second end portion having a second rivet
7 hole with a hole diameter larger than said uniform shaft
8 diameter thereby providing ~~[[a]]~~ said gap (12) between said

9 rivet shaft and a wall of said second rivet hole for
10 permitting said ~~limited~~ relative motion.

1 5. (original) The splice of claim 3, comprising a press-fit or
2 interference fit between said first shaft diameter and a
3 wall of said first rivet hole.

1 6. (original) The splice of claim 4, comprising a press-fit or
2 interference fit between said rivet shaft and a wall of
3 said first rivet hole.

1 7. (original) The splice of claim 2, wherein said rivet shaft
2 comprises a shaft shoulder (16) for clamping one of said
3 first and second sheet metal end portions.

1 8. (previously presented) The splice of claim 2, wherein said
2 rivet shaft has such an axial shaft length that a defined
3 clamping force providing friction in said splice is applied
4 to said first and second sheet metal end portions when said
5 rivet is set.

1 9. (original) The splice of claim 2, wherein said rivet shaft
2 has a threaded shaft end, and wherein said rivet closure
3 comprises a closure ring or collar with an internal
4 threading cooperating with said threaded shaft end for
5 applying an adjustable clamping force to said first and
6 second sheet metal end portions.

1 10. (currently amended) The splice of claim 2, wherein each of
2 said rivets in said ~~second~~ further row of rivets comprises
3 a locking collar.

1 11. (previously presented) The splice of claim 2, wherein said
2 first and second end portions comprise an upper sheet metal
3 end portion and a lower sheet metal end portion, said upper
4 sheet metal end portion comprising a recess (20) for
5 receiving said rivet head.

1 12. (previously presented) The splice of claim 1, wherein said
2 further row (7) of rivets extends directly next to said end
3 portion edge (4A) and in parallel to said at least one
4 fatigue critical row (6) of rivets that is subject to
5 dynamic loads, whereby said end portion edge (4A), said
6 fatigue critical row (6) and said further row (7) extend in
7 parallel to one another.

1 13. (currently amended) The splice of claim 1, wherein said gap
2 providing play is positioned between said rivet shaft and
3 that end portion of said first and second end portions
4 which forms an upper end portion.

[REMARKS CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE]

4549/WFF:kd

- 5 -